



The Advocate

Reclaiming our
College
A union of professionals



The promise of a community college is to attract people who live and work in our communities, educate and empower them to serve, and send them out to cultivate a just and vibrant society.

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SB 4 and Unjust Laws - Part 4

Editor's Note: For a longer version of this article, see the updated blog (aftlonestar.blogspot.com). As with previous articles in this series, all footnotes with complete URLs are available at the blog.

We have written in previous issues of *The Advocate* about the way that Senate Bill 4 poses a danger to students in our college. Our undocumented students or students with undocumented family members are increasingly stressed, absent from class, and withdrawing. I have had a student who withdrew because his undocumented family returned to Mexico; the student needed to work to support his nephews and nieces. Another student's family has made her—at age 21—the legal custodian of her little brother in case her parents are deported. Other students in threatened families just disappear with-



Source: Center for Law and Social Policy

out a conversation. Recent studies show that students in undocumented families are experiencing increased emotional stress under the current U.S. immigration policies including SB4¹

SB4 threatens penalties against institutions unless they collaborate with ICE's attacks on our communities. SB4 is the law. As a law, colleges and university are obliged to obey. SB4 "allows" college enforcement officers to question the immigration status of detained students but that "allowance" intends for the State of Texas to arrest and punish college/university administrators who don't cooperate with ICE "detainers"—requests by ICE to turn over student immigrants subject to possible deportation. In SB4, as in the former East Germany, individuals are encouraged to report any official or staff member suspected of overlooking immigration viola-

tions. We are to "scrutinize" each other, and report to ICE. This is not a Donald Rumsfeld's 2001 call for "vigilance," but a Stasi-like betrayal of each other.

Our belief is that SB4 is an unjust law and as such, American citizens should resist it, as we should resist all unjust laws that threaten our democratic values and future community safety.

Remember that the State of Texas was the *first* state to support a "DREAM" Act (H 1403/Senate Bill 1528 in 2001), where undocumented students would be eligible for "local" tuition status (in contrast with international tuition status). Now, our college will collude with ICE to detain and deport our students. Lone Star College has been too silent for our undocumented students. The University of Houston, for example, encourages DACA students in the transition from high school to university, provides additional emotional counseling, offers additional grants and scholarships, and provides resistance information against ICE.²

The Hollow Rhetoric of Civil Rights and Progress of Equality

In our college, we sometimes teach Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963) as an ideal of twentieth-century American rhetoric. I would recommend all administrators, staff, and faculty to re-read King for his argument against the "state's" assaults on disenfranchised and often silent community members. Within that letter, King argues that the 1954 *Board v Education* decision demonstrated that state and local segregation laws were unjust. Today, we look back at 1954 and pretend that segregation is "over." Perhaps in our self-righteousness, we tell ourselves that—if we lived then—we would *resist* the pre-1954 laws and support the local suits that led up to *Board v Education*. We believe that if we lived then, we would march in Birmingham and Montgomery and Selma.

We live then. We live today.

Today, *we are in history*, and SB4 is that decision that threatens our marginalized students, our communities, and our colleges. And we are too silent.

Martin Luther King argues that *unjust laws must be disobeyed*. He succinctly explains *which laws are unjust* to clarify:



1. “An unjust law is a code that is out of **harmony with the moral law**. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law.”
2. “Any law that **degrades human personality is unjust** [... giving] a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority”
3. Unjust laws “**substitutes an ‘I it’ relationship for an ‘I thou’ relationship** and ends up relegating persons to the status of things”

King’s argument is more complex than we excerpt here, but he concludes: “One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.”

We argue that Texas SB4 is an unjust for multiple reasons, including those that King argued fifty years ago. While history apparently sees King’s argument as correct, we are *present* in this political scene, and our state leadership argues that the least advantaged communities must be punished and another institution—the community college—must collaborate with those who have power. In short, the Abbott-Patrick-Paxton axis expect a community enclave that has always invited the community for safety, support, and engagement to simultaneously become a threat to the community. An application of King’s argument for unjust laws vis-a-vis Texas SB4:

SB4 is out of harmony with moral law. All the great monotheistic religions were *based* on migrants moving from land to land. The Old Testament calls not for exclusion, but inclusion: “For the Lord your God...loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:18-19). The Quran promises protection for refugees: “Surely your Lord, with respect to those who fly after they are persecuted, then they struggle hard and are patient, most surely your Lord after that is Forgiving, Merciful” (Surah 16:110). Most migrants come to the United States because of poverty, armed conflict in other countries, social strife, political turmoil, and economic hardships. All of

these reasons are moral calls—to individuals, families, and entire communities. SB4 expects the college to collaborate with a force to *return* our students to poverty, armed conflict in other countries, social strife, political turmoil, and economic hardships.

SB4 “degrades human personality” because it posits that all migrants are threats to our communities. Instead of elevating the humanity of migrants, those who support SB4 insult people based on their color, their heritages, their languages, their religions, and their life experiences. They also ignore other threats to the community, including threats to workers, educators, and all students with the persistent defunding of public education.

SB4 “substitutes an ‘I it’ relationship for an ‘I thou’ relationship.”

The argument for SB4 relegates persons to the status of things” —*things*, like “aliens” and “criminals” and “illegals” acting the “the sin of separation.” Texas is proud of its xenophobia, and the core of xenophobia comes from not seeing human to human. The axis of Abbott-Patrick-Paxton sees people other than themselves merely as “aliens” in their hate mongering; for example, Lt. Gov. Patrick’s recent campaign video that “criminal aliens” committed more than 500,000 Texas crimes in recent years is merely false.³

We want to discuss this further. As an institution of higher education, this community college should *lead* the community’s discussion on our laws and how these laws endanger our families and our communities. Lone Star College has many, many strengths. We call these strengths to lead the state discussion on migration and the aggressive detention and deportation we see around us.

As union members, we are called to become community leaders and stand for abolishing all such unjust laws. To start this discussion, we call for action, following the American Association of Community Colleges’ Commission on Diversity, Inclusion and Equity, for very specific activist leadership:

1. Resolutions issued by college presidents and trustees reaffirming diversity and inclusiveness as core values and the college’s commitment to supporting all immigrant students, including DACA and undocumented students



2. Policies to protect students in the event of Immigration and Custom Enforcement officials coming on campus
3. Creation of “safe zones” and Dreamer Resource Centers; posting FAQs and connection to resources, such as “Know Your Rights” flyers
4. Information sessions, counseling, and pro bono legal clinics offered in collaboration with community partners
5. Advocacy in support of DACA and a bipartisan DREAM Act
6. Training for counselors, staff, and faculty to become trusted allies and knowledgeable about best resources for Dreamers
7. Scholarships, including emergency funds, for immigrant students regardless of status.
8. Curriculum and assistance in accessing career pathways and accelerating degree completion⁴

Bruce J. Martin
Professor of English, LSC-North Harris

Endnotes

1. Roche, Kathleen M., et al. "Impacts of Immigration Actions and News and the Psychological Distress of US Latino Parents Raising Adolescents." *Journal of Adolescent Health* (2018).
2. DREAM Scholars. University of Houston. 2017. http://www.uh.edu/uep/events_programs/daca.html
3. Selby, Gardner. “Dan Patrick airs unsupported claim about 566,000 ‘crimes made’ by ‘criminal aliens’ in recent years.” PoliticFact Texas. 25 January 2018. <http://www.politifact.com/texas/statements/2018/jan/25/dan-patrick/dan-patrick-airs-unsupported-claim-about-566000-cr/>
4. Casner-Lotto, Jill. “News and Resources for Colleges Serving Undocumented Students.” Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education.” 6 February 2018. <http://cccic.org/outreach/resources-for-colleges-serving-undocumented-students/>



Supervisor Training



We often hear complaints from the administration that the college is spending an inordinate amount of money on legal issues. The AFT has always taken the position that such spending is the result of supervisors not being adequately trained in their jobs. We are delighted to see the college recently presenting a training session for supervisors, and we commend them for their efforts.

The trainer was Nancy Molina, Senior Assistant General Counsel. I have worked with Ms. Molina on several occasions as we helped supervisors and employees navigate through the grievance process. I have always found her to be objective, fair, and committed to due process.

Ms. Molina’s training is thoughtful and well-documented. She provides contact information for various administrative personnel to assist supervisors with a number of issues. The presentation is intended for supervisors, but it includes some information that all employees need to know.

She emphasizes the importance of following college policy and employment law:

“Not complying with employment laws has real legal consequences for the College, your subordinates, and for you.”

“The College is likely to be held ultimately responsible for most of the employment decisions you make as a supervisor.”

“For fiscal year 2014-2015, the College spent a large majority of its outside legal expenses paying labor and employment firms to defend the College from decisions by college supervisors.”



As a side-note on this point, a member of the Board of Trustees once stated in open session that the college has spent \$1.5 M in the past five years on legal issues and pointed the finger at the AFT for those expenditures. Our position has always been that if the college wants to avoid those expenses, they should make better decisions. The AFT is simply defending our members as a response to what we believe are bad decisions.

On the issue of employees' requesting to bring a representative to a meeting called by the supervisor, Ms. Molina has a PowerPoint slide stating, "Learn how to deal with employee 'representatives'" and explains that if a supervisor calls a meeting to discuss a problem, the employee may not bring a representative to the meeting even though the employee wants to bring a "union representative."

She goes on to say, "First things first, the College does not have a union. Indeed, the College, per state law, cannot recognize a collective bargaining agreement."

She notes, "You have the right to manage an employee's day-to-day performance without another person's interference. You do not have to allow any 'representative'—union or otherwise—to be present during a supervisor-requested, performance-related meeting." She does point out, however, that the supervisor may have a witness present.

Ms. Molina goes on to note, "This is not the case in the Employee Grievance and Review Process, Board Policy IV.E.6. Employees may bring a representative to such a meeting."

Ms. Molina is correct in stating that an employee does not have the right to bring a representative to a meeting called by a supervisor, and we agree that routine meetings between an employee and a supervisor need to be one-on-one meetings. It should be noted that policy does not forbid the presence of representation in supervisor-requested meetings. There may be (and there have been) occasions when supervisors have invited AFT representatives to join in and help out with particular issues. Although this is rare, these meetings have helped to solve problems without starting the grievance process at all. Ms. Molina is also correct in stating that an employee absolutely has the right to bring a representative if the employee initiates a grievance, including an informal resolution conference.

I do want to address the comment that the college

does not have a union. Ms. Molina is correct that the college cannot recognize a collective bargaining agreement because the State of Texas prohibits collective bargaining for most public employees.¹ That, however, does not mean that the college does not have a union. There is, in fact, a union present at the college, but LSC does not, and cannot, own the union. That is precisely the union's value. It is the employees who have a union. Throughout the history of the modern labor movement, workers banded together to form unions to represent their interests, and those unions existed and thrived long before their employers or the government recognized them.

Alan Hall

Endnote

¹ Actually, some public employees *do* have collective bargaining rights. That is because of an effort involving Kevin Bailey, our first AFT President and later State Representative for District 140. Kevin was the House Sponsor of a bill allowing bargaining rights over wages, hours, and working conditions for municipal non-uniformed employees in Houston. Kevin was additionally involved in securing bargaining rights for Houston police officers.

**We Care.
We Show Up.
We Advocate Together.
AFT-Lone Star College.**



Grievance and Appeal Policy

For quite some time, AFT-Lone Star has been engaged in advocating fair policies in the college, particularly grievance policies. We have written extensively in *The Advocate* and have addressed the Board many times regarding our concern about fair grievance policies.

Thanks to several fair-minded members of the LSC Board, the college made significant progress regarding grievances and appeals at the February 1,



2018 meeting of the Board of Trustees. On the agenda were three proposed policy changes that concerned the union. First, Action Item # 2 would have taken away the right to appeal to the Board in cases of change of contract status. Action Item # 3 would have taken away the right to appeal to the Board in grievance cases. Action Item # 4 would have taken away the right to appeal to the Board in cases of contract terminations.

A **yes** vote would be a vote in favor of the three action items which would **take away** employee rights. A **no** vote would retain the current policy that would **protect employee rights** on these issues.

All of these action items were voted down 5 – 3, a victory for employee rights.

Here is how the vote went.

Action Item # 2

Yes: Alton Smith, Ron Trowbridge, Ken Lloyd.

No: Art Murillo, Linda Good, Kyle Scott, David Vogt, Myriam Saldivar

Action Item # 3

Yes: Alton Smith, Ron Trowbridge, Myriam Saldivar

No: Art Murillo, Linda Good, Kyle Scott, David Vogt, Ken Lloyd

Action Item # 4

Yes: Alton Smith, Ron Trowbridge, Myriam Saldivar

No: Art Murillo, Linda Good, Kyle Scott, David Vogt, Ken Lloyd

The AFT is grateful that Board members Art Murillo, Linda Good, Kyle Scott, David Vogt, Myriam Saldivar, and Ken Lloyd cast votes that led to 5 – 3 defeats of the proposed policies. It is apparent that Chancellor Head and General Counsel Mario Castillo supported these defeated policies. I have been attending Board of Trustee meetings for more than thirty years, and I cannot recall an instance where a majority of the Board voted down something that the chancellor wanted to pass. This vote was historic and crucial to employees' rights. These board members deserve significant credit for the stand that they took.

An additional agenda item at the February 2018 Board of Trustees meeting was Action Item # 5, a major overhaul of the Human Resources Section of the Policy Manual. It passed unanimously. There are two offending provisions that now live in the Policy Manual (offending language in bold face):

IV.G.1.4. Administrative Leave

The Chancellor may place any employee on paid or unpaid administrative leave at any time during the employee's employment. An employee on administrative leave remains a College employee and is subject to all College and Board policies and procedures. **The Chancellor's decision placing an employee on administrative leave is final—it is not subject to an administrative review process and is not grievable.**

IV.G.3.2. Non-Contractual Employees

Non-contractual employees are employed at will and have no property interest in their continued employment. A non-contractual employee's employment may be immediately terminated with or without prior notice and with or without a reason. **Non-contractual employees have no due process right of notice or opportunity for an appeal hearing.**

Speaking on behalf of the AFT at the November 2017 Board of Trustees meeting, John Burghduff stated,

"There are proposed revisions to the Policy Manual receiving a first reading here this month that would narrow the pathway for employees seeking to appeal adverse administrative decisions even farther. Proposed policy IV.G.3.2 would deny any due process right of appeal to a terminated non-contractual worker. Under proposed policy IV.G.1.4, the Chancellor's decision to place an employee on administrative leave would not be subject to administrative review and would not be grievable."

These two policies, buried in a huge section of the policy manual, take away non-contractual employee rights of due process. The union strongly believes that all LSC employees deserve due process and will continue to advocate for non-contractual employees on these issues.

Alan Hall



Due Process and Proportionality

In the previous issue of *The Advocate*, Michael McFarland wrote about the sexual harassment training at LSC and invited us to think seriously about how we as a community should address sexual harassment cases on campus going forward. He invited a conversation on *due process* and *proportionality*.

In this article, I take him up on the invitation to widen the conversation by trying to define what sexual harassment is.

Sexual harassment is often framed as an issue of consent, mixed signals between men and women, and differing opinions of what consent is. This viewpoint makes the issue of sexual harassment much more about *sex* than about *harassment* and therefore less grievous than other cases of workplace harassment. This viewpoint does injustice to cases of sexual harassment.

In the same issue of the *Advocate*, John Burghduff gives us a vivid image of the effect of any kind of harassment on an employee, from his experience on the AFT executive board over four decades. He writes, “Frequently, employees approach those of us on the AFT executive board deeply concerned about a workshop relationship (most frequently with supervisors) that seems to be going off the rails. Usually, they are very disturbed and they know that the situation cannot continue as it is, but they don’t want confrontation. They just want to be able to do their work, know that they are meeting the expectations of their job, and get along with their coworkers.”

Using these images of harassment that Burghduff gives us—the employees being deeply concerned, going off the rails, very disturbed, simply trying to get on with their work and unable to do so because of the harassment—I would argue that sexual harassment creates the same effects on employees. Therefore, it would help to think of sexual harassment as harassment that is *sexualized*, rather than as something less than (or less clearly defined than)

other forms of workplace harassment. In fact, it is arguably the most extreme and most hostile form of harassment (resulting, for example, in the Larry Nassar case, in the suicide of one of his victims), and, where assault is concerned, most clearly defined in the law. Also, as Burghduff reminds us, these conflicts occur most frequently with supervisors, indicating the *power relationship* most likely to be present in any workplace harassment case, including sexual harassment.

AFT
Promotes
Due Process.

Along the same lines, when we think of *proportionality* in sexual harassment cases, there is general consensus that acts of rape are, of course, to receive zero tolerance, but that lesser forms of harassment short of rape, ranging from *quid pro quo* to sending suggestive texts and emails and telling sexual jokes, are much less clear offenses that should be ignored

(because they probably fall along the lines of confusions about sexuality). But if these forms of sexual harassment create a *hostile* work environment that makes employees “very disturbed” and unable to “do their work,” then they are the most grievous forms of workplace harassment. If people have gotten away with harassment before, ranging from crude jokes and inappropriate remarks to inappropriate touching and propositions, it is not because they were confused about the correctness of their actions, but because they were allowed to get away with what they did.

In her article “The Unsexy Truth about Harassment,” Melissa Gira Grant, a freelance journalist for many noted publications, complains about a culture of disregard where sexual harassment is concerned.¹ Following the investigations into inappropriate conduct by New York public radio station WNYC hosts Leonard Lopate, Jonathan Schwartz, and John Hockenberry, Grant recalled her own repeated harassment by her boss in the form of sexts attempting to sexualize a professional relationship. She writes, “The reactions to #MeToo—what has become shorthand for a mass reckoning with sexual harassment—have taken almost the opposite emphasis. Sex has overshadowed harassment. The stories women have related under the #MeToo banner are getting edited down to something else, a vaguer



behavior: 'sexual misconduct.' This is a mistake. Misconduct can sound like a purely interpersonal problem, a disagreement that causes 'offense' but is no one's fault in particular. Harassment, however, is enabled by a system: the boss, the human resources department (if there is one), a workplace culture of disregard. Harassment is at its most effective in such an enabling environment."¹

Grant argues that while most people think of sexual harassment as a violation of consent, it is, in fact, legally defined as a form of sex discrimination, a violation of civil rights. Therefore, the point I would like to start out at is that sexual harassment is a workplace harassment issue and an issue of civil rights, and it should be taken seriously on these grounds, no matter how acceptable the behaviors listed in our Title IX training have been in the past. I sympathize that there may be a great deal of anxiety about what behavior is now suddenly unacceptable on campus and questions about ensuring due process. However, as we think about fair access to due process, it's important to remember those to whom due process has long been denied; if anything, the due process for so many years where sexual harassment was concerned was to let boys be boys and look the other way.

I acknowledge that sorting out what due process and proportionality will look like is important, precisely because of our vulnerability as workers and the uneven power structure in any workplace. I also understand the flaws with the grievance procedures in place. As McFarland and others have discussed in previous issues of *The Advocate*, if an employee is unfairly accused of something, there may be little that employee can do to appeal the grievance process.

However, we prefer that these complications of process be framed in terms of the administration vs. the employee or as critiques of and concerns about the current procedures and how they will take on Title IX, rather than as a special complication brought about by the muddiness of sexual harassment cases. Sexual harassment is often put under suspicion and trivialized in discussions of due process and proportionality. Sexual harassment is *not* about sex. It is *not* about misunderstanding sexual norms or misunderstanding signals. It certainly should *not* be treated, as in the Anita Hill case, as a he-said vs. she-said situation.

We hope that a new awareness of sexual harassment on campus will produce a process that ensures that a person who is sexually harassed at work on our campus will receive a response that allows that person to continue to work, now that a legal liability has been set and announced for that behavior.

It is a common misconception that USA gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar's accusers never spoke up. In fact, the journalist who first broke the story, Mark Alesia, says that the gymnasts did complain, repeatedly, as far back as 1997, without any response from authorities. The lack of response *was* due process in their case.² It is also true Joe Paterno and others had received allegations about Jerry Sandusky sexually assaulting young boys, but they did not call the police.³ Until now, we *have* had due process, and that due process has often been an old boys' network protecting the powerful against the powerless.

Lastly, sexual harassment is often discussed in terms of equals, of men and women misapprehending their communications. But the vast majority of sexual harassment occurs under conditions of massive power inequality, in the case of farm workers, domestic workers, restaurant workers, hotel workers, native American women, and other women working in oppressive conditions who are already from marginalized communities.

In the past issue, McFarland, Burghdoff, and Locander all make it too clear through three different articles that we are part of the union because our jobs are not secure and power relations are not equal, that conflicts with supervisors are common, that the AFT has had to step in to help employees where power relations have been unequal, and that often employees' jobs have been on the line. *The Advocate* is rife with stories of punitive actions against employees, problems with the grievance procedure, ambush tactics, and cruel treatment of employees, where the AFT has had to step in.

There are two hypothetical situations in which an employee might be concerned where sexual harassment procedures are concerned. First, Bob Locander writes about an incident involving a male supervisor engaging in inappropriate sexual talk where *due process without the AFT* would have meant that the women employees would be afraid



to take the matter to college administrators out of fear “about the ‘good old boys’ network.” On the other hand, in McFarland’s hypothetical situation of “false allegations against an innocent person,” we can well imagine a different case in which the college uses the grievance policy and the sexual harassment procedure to begin punitive action against an employee motivated by other reasons. In both cases, the spirit with which we address case of sexual harassment should be the same as that with which we address *all* issues of conflict between employee and supervisor and all issues of harassment of employees. The problem is not sexual harassment—the new issue on the block ready to make heads roll—but rather ensuring that in all complaints brought against an employee, the employee is treated fairly. The important issues we should be concerned with in each case of complaint against an employee are the power imbalance between employee and administration and the need for AFT to advocate on behalf of all employees.

The problem has never been, and *should not be defined as*, the confusion of what constitutes sexual harassment or the confusion about what liability is due for a certain behavior. Rather, the point is how to protect employees under the new procedures, both those seeking recourse for sexual harassment and those unfairly targeted by administration on sexual harassment charges for other politically motivated reasons, and the need to involve the AFT in the process to ensure that the situation is addressed justly. At the least, we hope the new Title IX training will bring changes to our workplace culture. At the best, we hope that it will strengthen the conversations we are already having about workplace behavior and the grievance procedure.

Gemini Wahaj
Professor of English, LSC-North Harris

Endnotes

1. <http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2017/12/08/the-unsexy-truth-about-harassment/>
2. https://www.democracynow.org/2018/1/29/with_1arry_nassar_sentenced_for_sexual
3. https://www.democracynow.org/2011/11/11/penn_state_coverup_fired_paterno

Better Together

Editors note: Below is the transcript of John Burghduff’s presentation on behalf of the AFT to the Board of Trustees at the March 1, 2018 meeting.

Good evening. I am John Burghduff, representing the American Federation of Teachers.

Some two years ago, a team of 115 faculty and staff representatives from across Lone Star College met to identify cultural beliefs all college employees could embrace that would move us towards the results we collectively desire to achieve. I was privileged to be one of those 115 employees. These six cultural beliefs, which became the foundation of the LSC 20|20 initiative, were not intended to be just slogans, but were meant to be aspirational goals for the college to grow into. As such, they are worthy of a renewed commitment.

One of the cultural beliefs of LSC 20|20 is “Better Together.” This belief asserts that, as college employees, we should share knowledge and encourage collaboration to reach common goals.

Better Together is a phrase that reverberates well with union folk. From the earliest days of labor unions over a hundred years ago, workers in all manner of endeavors have understood the value of joining hands with one another to promote the professionalism of their craft and the dignity of their work. The modern labor movement did not arise with the blessing of management. Early unions did not enjoy the recognition and support of government. However, over time, enlightened leaders in both industry and government recognized that listening to the voice of workers truly made everyone better together. Ronald Reagan, when he was campaigning for the presidency in 1980 said “Where free unions and collective bargaining are forbidden, freedom is lost.”

Here at Lone Star College, our local of the AFT was founded in the 1980s without the blessing of college administration. We do not have, nor do we claim the right to, collective bargaining or the right to strike because the government of Texas does not agree with Ronald Reagan on these points. To quote our local president, Alan Hall, “[Members] join



because they believe that . . . employees should be treated with dignity and respect, that employees should help each other, that employees should have a voice in their professional lives, that employees deserve fair pay and good working conditions, and that the district needs a system providing checks and balances.”

Currently, the membership roll of AFT-Lone Star College numbers approximately 500. Our members are faculty and staff, full-time employees and part-time employees. All have joined voluntarily; all voluntarily pay monthly dues because we believe that we truly are better together.

Over the years, we have grown even through times when college administration has strived to marginalize us. But we have also enjoyed times when administrators from deans to chancellors have realized that by working with us, problems can be solved together, whether those are individual personnel issues, fixing policy flaws, or helping the community around us to understand why investing in the college is a good thing.

In the past, we have worked effectively with the current chancellor and the college presidents. That collaboration has been lost, sadly, and has been replaced by conflict that has been costly both in financial and human terms. Tonight, speaking on behalf of the executive board and the members of the AFT, I propose a reboot. Laying aside the events of the last year or so, I invite the chancellor to meet with the leadership of our local in open conversation about issues that matter to us all. I invite the college presidents to meet with the AFT executive board members on your campuses. We offer a unique perspective that crosses all categories of employees. We focus on a broad array of issues. We have access to resources from our state and national affiliates that can help us find solutions to problems we have all struggled with for a long time, like finally coming to a consensus on grievances in a way that protects employees, supports the needs of the college and preserves the oversight of the Board of Trustees.

Yes, we believe that we can be and that we are better together and that the time is ripe to reinvigorate that premise. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Community Schools: Bringing Academic Achievement to Every Neighborhood

Editor's note: Below is the transcript of John Burghduff's presentation on behalf of the AFT to the Board of Trustees at the March 1, 2018 meeting.

Socio-economic status has a profound impact on students' probability of success in school; this has been well-documented. Nationwide, schools in poorer communities, especially communities of color, are funded at significantly lower levels than schools in richer communities. Lack of adequate funding leads to subpar facilities, technology that is lacking or out of date, and inadequate staffing. In addition, students at lower socioeconomic levels have less access to consistent, quality health care and adequate nutrition. Income instability can lead to frequent moves and periods of homelessness that interfere with schooling. Family members, although they may wish desperately for their loved ones to succeed in school, have frequently not experienced that success themselves and don't know how to help. In addition, institutionalized racism fuels the school-to-prison pipeline over school-to-college-to career pathways.

For all these reasons, it is heartening to see Lone Star College making a new and innovative commitment to the southern part of our district where all these factors are most heavily felt. By all accounts, Dr. Quentin Wright, president of the future Lone Star College-Houston North, is doing all the right things to build a cohesive and inclusive team with faculty and staff input at the center. It is especially impressive that Dr. Wright and the System Administration recognize that simply creating a carbon copy of the other six colleges in a new place will not be adequate to guarantee success for the prospective students in the area from East Aldine through Acres Homes to Fairbanks.

Although LSC-Houston North will be working with college students, the opening of this seventh college has brought to mind the Community Schools¹ movement, a bold re-visioning of K-12 education that is being implemented in underserved communities across the country with the partnership of the American Federation of Teachers, the national affiliate of AFT-Lone Star College.



Community Schools are public schools. Outside corporations do not swoop in, take over, and gut the existing schools for profit. Rather, teachers, staff and administrators within the schools work together with families and businesses in the neighborhood to reinvent the school as a hub of the community.

We have a Community School right here in Houston. Houston ISD, in collaboration with the Houston Federation of Teachers (an AFT local), has substantially redesigned Durkee Elementary School, just south of Aldine. For an inspiring video about the transformation of this school, please visit the following link.

<https://youtu.be/VxsYcIQBf7Y>



So, what is a Community School?



The hallmark of a Community School is the incorporation of wrap-around services. These services are tailor-made to the unique situation of the school and the surrounding community. The idea is that, if services are not available in the community, they should be integrated into the school. Examples of services that may be provided include:

- 1) Academic services like tutoring, provided by qualified teachers who are paid for overtime work outside of school hours. This tutoring might be in person or over the phone.
- 2) Enrichment activities for the students out in the community.
- 3) Medical services like primary, vision, dental,

mental health and nutritional services.

- 4) Adult education classes for family members of students and other people in the community
- 5) Early childhood education and (at the high school level or higher) child-care for students with children of their own
- 6) Career and technical education
- 7) Integration of transportation resources so that the school is accessible to the community
- 8) Intensive counseling services for students caught in the trauma of violence, substance abuse, and institutional racism often associated with poverty. This counseling includes “restorative practices” that teach students and their families how to deal with conflict in a positive, collaborative way.

Community Schools are committed to a strong academic curriculum with support from community partners. Academic rigor is not zoned by zip code. Flexible scheduling strategies are incorporated to give students more learning time while respecting the workload of teachers. Instructional strategies can include project-based and service learning opportunities with community partners to supplement the classroom.

Community Schools engage families and communities. Community members don't just receive services; they are also integrated into the decision-making process in planning and implementing changes in school policies, programs, and facilities. This heightens the sense of ownership community members feel about the success of both their children and their neighborhoods.

Community Schools always employ a site resource coordinator to make sure that all of the support services and community providers are working together well.

Finally, Community Schools are governed at the local level. The people who most directly see the challenges and needs faced by the students are the teachers and the support staff working in the school. Therefore, faculty and staff at the local level are incorporated into the decision making process in meaningful ways.



What outcomes are being seen in Community Schools?

Schools transform from low-performing to high-performing. Graduation rates rise dramatically. Also, students miss fewer class days because health and nutrition needs are being addressed. Family members, incorporated into the life of the school, can better support their children's learning. Students stay in one school because families don't have to move to obtain needed services.

The video about Durkee Elementary highlights two specific but unexpected positive outcomes. First, because the students are learning about restorative practices, the number of children sent to the principal's office has dropped to zero. Second, home ownership in the neighborhood is improving because people want to move to the community so their children can attend the school. Thus, indirectly, the school is revitalizing the community.

Community Schools require a major investment in resources and imagination but are moving the needle on academic success in underserved communities, including communities of color. To learn more about Community Schools please visit the following website:

<https://www.aft.org/position/community-schools>

LSC-Houston North shares the same target audience as Community Schools, albeit at the college level. There are clear differences between college and K-12 but there are enough similarities both in terms of opportunities and challenges that lessons can be learned and ideas can be adapted. Let us all work together for the success of this endeavor.

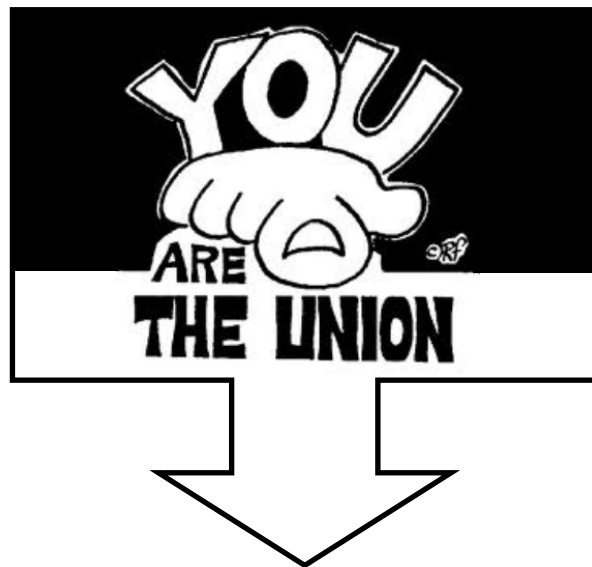


John Burghduff,
Professor of Math, LSC-CyFair

Endnote

1. Community Schools is not related to "Communities in Schools," a non-profit organization to which Lone Star College outsources some counseling services.

Why Did You Join the Union?



Early in February, Alan Hall and I left our offices in A217 and were walking out to our cars just before 5, heavily laden, I always must point out, with folders full of papers to be graded—the eternal fate of English and ESOL teachers.

Alan asked me, "Why did you join the union?"

"You know, I probably wouldn't have if I had taken a different office when I came here."

"Really? Why is that?"

"I don't come from a union family...and I wasn't particularly fond of unions—the corruption, lots of political maneuvering..."

"That can be true. So, why *did* you join?"

"I'll tell you. Sitting in my office, again and again I saw people walk by—'Is Alan in?' Time after time, they would go into your office and stay for quite a while and talk. Sometimes they sounded pretty upset, but they always left looking a little calmer.

Over time, I realized how well you advised them and suggested ways forward, how you represented them when they needed it, and sometimes spoke to them about their role in the problem and what *they* needed to change.



I realized that many problems were solved at a very low level before they became big problems.”

He smiled and looked a little less tired.

(Alan Hall used to get releases over the school year to handle union issues. The State AFT provided a grant that paid for five courses per year that were taught by adjuncts. Dr. Pickelman first approved this because he thought Alan’s assistance was valuable to the college. Dr. Carpenter ended the agreement. Dr. Head reinstated it when he became chancellor, but stopped it again last August.)

I thought about all the times I have seen Alan Hall straighten his tie, pick up his sword and fight for people who don’t have any power at all. He didn’t always win, but almost always made the situation better for the person who felt powerless or threatened. I thought about how “Better Together” means what Alan Hall does. I thought about how much I wished the LSC administration could see what I saw so clearly.

We were outside, close to our cars at this point.

“That was really good,” he said. “We should write all that down and put it in *The Advocate*.”

I laughed. “We always say that.”

But this time, I did.

Katie Hurter,
Professor of ESOL, LSC-North Harris



Why did YOU join AFT?

Continue the conversation at
aftlonestar.blogspot.com.

Send a short post to
Alaubachwright@gmail.com
on why you are a
union member!



Sherri Anne Ryan White

“The audience cannot see you if you are looking at your feet!” —A comment oft heard by all of Sherri’s aspiring young actors.

To say goodbye to a dear and loving friend is difficult at best, and to say a final goodbye makes it even sadder. Sherri Ryan White is a dear and loving friend who passed away this last February after a lengthy illness.

She was the ultimate faculty theater Mom, known to many drama students from both North Harris and Tomball. Her students were her “Baby Angels” and she loved them with a fervor that lingers still in the back-stage wings, costume shop, and green rooms of LSC-Tomball’s Blackbox and Performing Arts Theater.

Sherri lived to teach life and the love of the arts to her students. She reached out to those who needed a place to belong. Whether putting in many hours a week rehearsing a show, or taking her students to TCCSTA Playfests competitions, or having fun with her Drama Club, Sherri was always about the character of the student who was playing the roles as well as the role the student was playing.

The AFT has lost a dear friend, and there is a hole in my soul that is lighted by the brilliance of the love Sherri Ryan White gave to us all.

You will be missed Sherri, but never forgotten.

Richard Becker
Professor of Criminal Justice, LSC-Tomball



Tales from the Unionside

So many stories, so little space.

A Woman's Story—The union women of West Virginia affiliated with the AFT and the NEA unions pulled off the impossible in early March. Their wild-cat teachers' strike against the advice of everyone but themselves showed the power of collective action for a just cause. To win a new contract with a 5 percent salary increase and a public promise from elected officials to look at providing relief from mounting health care cost increases was a monumental political victory in a state where teachers have no collective bargaining rights and no right to strike.

In thumbing their noses at Republican Governor James Justice, who had called the teachers “dumb bunnies,” the West Virginian women making up 70 percent of the K-12 teaching ranks banded together to force the hand of Governor Justice and the GOP Legislature. With Republicans generally opposed to doing much for public education and uniformly opposed to teachers' unions, this political action in the Mountain State may get teachers moving in other states for their students and themselves.

AFT President Randi Weingarten had an interesting observation to make about the decentralized nature of the West Virginia teachers' strike and the Republicans in power. Weingarten suggested that as the GOP continues to undercut public school teachers, it might confront a worse situation than sitting down at the table with unions. “If the right wing gets what it wants and tries to eliminate collective bargaining in the public sector, then politics—this kind of political action at the ballot box, in the state house—will be the only avenue,” she said.



A Lupe Story—If America can elect a loopy president, then can Texas elect a Lupe governor? In the March Democratic primary election for governor, Lupe Valdez, endorsed by the Texas AFL-CIO, led the



nine-candidate field with 436,295 votes, compared to 278,588 votes for Andrew White, the son of a former governor. This result sets up a May 22 runoff election between Valdez and White with the winner taking on Republican Greg Abbott in November. With a \$40 million war chest in a deep red state, Abbott is a prohibitive favorite, likely to win over Valdez or White in the fall. My hope is that Democrats will select Lupe Valdez, as the gay former Dallas County sheriff represents everything Republicans are not—you can fill in the blanks here. While the *Houston Chronicle* endorsed Andrew White as the best-qualified candidate on the Democratic side, his candidacy would be a step back in time when male Anglo Democrats sat in the governor's chair and did little for the working people of Texas. With D's like this in the past, who needed Republicans in office!

A Stupid Story—Texas US Senator Rafael Edward Cruz, better known as “Lyn’ Ted,” wasted little time in breaking out an attack ad against his Democratic opponent on the day after the March voting. Cruz's commercial was directed against his November Democratic party opponent Beto O'Rourke of El Paso. Calling O'Rourke “Liberal Robert,” the Cruz campaign suggested that his general election opponent used the nickname “Beto” as a shameless disguise to better fit in with the state's Hispanic population, which votes heavily for the D's.

The O'Rourke campaign made Cruz, the most despised senator in Washington of either political party, look stupid, as it released a picture of preschooler “Robert” with the name “Beto” stitched on his sweater. While Ted Cruz was fooled, many of the 254,949 Democratic voters for Sema Hernandez in O'Rourke's race were not.





Without much of a campaign and little political visibility, Hernandez has a Spanish surname that drew 23.7% of the Senate primary vote. For his part, O'Rourke ended up with 641,052 votes, while on the Republican side, Senator Ted Cruz received 1,315,456 votes.

A Fish Story—For state and national political junkies, the story of the Texas “Blue Wave” was everywhere in the Press. Some respected nonpartisan political analysts even got swept up with blue wave fever, and Governor Greg Abbott sent out a political SOS call to Republican voters that a blue wave epidemic might turn out to be a deadly plague for the Texas GOP.

In case you skip political news stories, the “blue wave” effect refers to a Democratic party uprising in Texas that would throw the Republicans, who have controlled every state government position since 1998, out of power. Based on the voter turnout in the March 7 primaries, the blue wave turned out to be a red backwash. Despite the early voting results that tipped in a Democratic direction, the final count showed Republicans outvoting Democrats by 500,000 votes.

After the election, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick had some fun at the Democrats’ expense by saying that the blue wave never made “landfall” in Texas. Having spent the last two years working on a book on state politics, it came as no surprise to me that Texas proved itself once again to be neither a red nor a blue state but a nonvoting state. The March election brought out 2.5 million primary voters from both parties, or around 17% of all the state’s registered voters. This total needs to be put into a political context of two million state citizens who are unregistered to vote for a variety of reasons. With some of the worst national numbers on voting turnout and citizen registration, it may be time for the League of Women Voters of Texas to consider a name change to the League of St. Jude.

A Sad Story—David Robinson died on January 9, 2018. It was in January of 1981 when Dave became the first political challenger to win a seat on the North Harris County College Board of Trustees over the incumbent Lawrence Adams. Adams was one of

seven rubber stamp board members owing their positions to the political clout of NHCC President W. W. Thorne.

After Robinson filed for office, Mr. Thorne asked the union-backed UHD professor to withdraw from the race by appealing to his sense of fairness and respect for tradition. According to Thorne, Professor Robinson would be violating the “gentleman’s agreement” established by the founding fathers of the college. This non-binding agreement laid out a system whereby the seven-member board would

have three Aldine, two Spring, and two Humble ISD resident trustees. Should Robinson of Spring beat Adams of Aldine, this result would violate the original agreement and create a geographic representational imbalance.

The real concern of President Thorne had nothing to do with

fairness, tradition, or geographic representation, but everything to do with Thorne’s total loss of total board control should the challenger beat a W. W. crony. Dave Robinson’s win over Adams was achieved through the work of the AFT and other unions in the college district. This victory was a turning point for our union as it showed what teachers can do through collective action against long political odds. We put the first dent in the political armor of Bill Thorne and his Harris County politicians.

As for David Robinson, he would go on to serve two additional terms of office on the Board of Trustees. In his 1993 reelection campaign, Kingwood Professor Steve Davis, then editor of *The Advocate*, would write that Robinson “has been a progressive voice over his time on the Board in regard to college affairs, and has maintained cordial relations with the AFT.” This was no small accomplishment, given the times in which Dave served. Rest in peace, old friend.

Bob Locander
Professor of Political Science, LSC-North Harris

Editor’s note: Locander is a regular political columnist for The Advocate.





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1. To be eligible for the benefits under the AFT Home Financing Program, applicants must identify themselves as AFT Members during the loan application process. AFT membership is subject to verification.

2. All loan applications are subject to credit, property approval and income verification. Rates, program terms and conditions are subject to change without notice. Not all products are available in all states or for all amounts. Other restrictions and limitations apply.

*The AFT Home Financing Program is currently offered in the following states: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington.

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GO TO:

www.aft.org/about/member-benefits



If you are interested in membership, benefits, or would like to discuss a work-related issue, our **AFT Faculty and Staff Vice-Presidents** are here to assist. Please don't hesitate to contact them. See the back page of this publication for contact information.



AFT-Lone Star College

AFT Local Union # 4518

GOALS

- To promote academic excellence
- To protect academic freedom in higher education
- To preserve and protect the integrity and unique identity of each of the institutions of higher education in Texas
- To protect the dignity and rights of faculty against discrimination
- To ensure that faculty have an effective voice on all matters pertaining to their welfare
- To secure for all members the rights to which they are entitled
- To raise the standards of the profession by establishing professional working conditions
- To encourage democratization of higher education
- To promote the welfare of the citizens of Texas by providing better educational opportunities for all
- To initiate and support state legislation which will benefit the students and faculty of Texas
- To promote and assist the formation and growth of Texas United Faculty chapters throughout Texas
- To maintain and promote the aims of the American Federation of Teachers and other affiliated labor bodies

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Full-time Faculty	\$40.00
Full-time Professional Staff	\$28.60
Full-time Support Staff	\$25.88
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Part-time Staff	\$14.00

Membership Eligibility

Membership in the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) is open to full and part-time faculty and staff up through the dean level. If you would like to join or find out more information about membership, please contact any of the officers listed on page 20 of this newsletter, or check out our online information and application at:

www.aftlonestar.org



www.texasaft.org

American Federation of Teachers
Texas AFT
AFL-CIO



www.aft.org



American Federation of Teachers Lone Star College



Directions: How to Join the AFT

AFT-Lone Star has a new online form that makes it easy for new members to join or for current members to switch to our new system.

Here's the best way to sign up:

1. Go to **<https://join.aft.org>**. From the pull-down menu in the box under "FIND A LOCAL," choose "Texas." Click "search" and then scroll down to find "AFT Lone Star College, Local 4518."
2. Fill out the form that appears; you're asked to provide your name, address and so on. Toward the bottom of the page, a question asks, "Are you an AFT member transitioning from payroll deduction e-bank transfer system?" Check "yes" if you have previously been a member and are transitioning to the new payment system.
3. You're then asked to identify your membership category: Full-time faculty, Full-time professional staff, etc.
4. You're then asked to provide your bank name, routing number and account number, check boxes authorizing the semi-monthly deductions for dues, and type your name. Then, press "SUBMIT." **YOU'RE DONE!** (in minutes!)

Note:

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Call for Articles

We invite all employees to send us their opinions, news, questions, and so forth. *The Advocate* is a forum for information and free interchange of ideas. Send your articles to **Katie Hurter, Editor** via e-mail: katie.hurter@lonestar.edu, or submit to any of the following officers.

Alan Hall, President	North Harris	ACAD 217-G	281-618-5544
Stephen King	North Harris	ACAD 162-H	281-618-5530
Chris Phlegar	North Harris	ACAD 270-H	281-618-5583
Rich Almstedt	Kingwood	FTC 100-G	281-312-1656
Laura Codner	Kingwood	CLA 110-D	281-312- 414
Catherine Olson	Tomball	S 153 -H	281-357-3776
Richard Becker	Tomball	E 271-D	281-401-1835
Janet Moore	Tomball	E 210 -E	281-401-1871
Van Piercy	Tomball	S 153-J	281-401-1814
Martina Kusi-Mensah	Montgomery	G 121-J	936-273-7276
Louise Casey-Clukey	Montgomery	B 100-G	936-273-7394
John Burghduff	Cy-Fair	HSC 250-G	281-290-3915
Cindy Hoffart-Watson	Cy-Fair	LRNC 101-C	281-290-3265
Earl Brewer	Fairbanks	S - 13	832-782-5029

The union encourages employees to join because they believe that college employees should have a voice in their professional lives. We don't encourage employees to join because they anticipate conflict or are already engaged in a conflict. In fact, if they are already embroiled in a situation, we are unable to help them. It is all too common for someone to approach the AFT and say something like, "I've been an employee for the district for several years, and I've just recognized the importance of joining." Typically, following that comment is, "I'm in trouble and need help." I finally lost track of how many times in the last year I've had to say, "I'm sorry, but member benefits don't cover anything that pre-dates membership." The individuals to whom I had to give this message were invited to join and provided some advice on how to proceed with their situation, but assistance

ended there. Were they members, a host of benefits would have been available.

The AFT provides its members with advice and guidance as well as representation in conflict resolution and grievances. We have our own local attorney and can seek legal advice and counsel for members. We maintain a local legal defense fund. In addition, membership dues include, at no extra charge, \$8 million in professional liability insurance for claims arising out of professional activities.

Most of our members don't join because they believe that they may need the AFT's help in a conflict. They join because they believe in the values of the AFT— that employees should be treated with dignity and respect, that employees should help each other, that employees should have a voice

in their professional lives, that employees deserve fair pay and good working conditions, and that the district needs a system providing checks and balances. They join because they want to support an organization that helps others in so many ways. A nice benefit is that, if they do need help, AFT is there for them.

If you believe in these values and are not a member, now is the perfect time to join. If you believe in our values, take action now and join the AFT.

—Alan Hall

